

The Value of Bukit Kepong as an Educational Film: A Research

Rosnaini Hj. Mahmud

Faculty of Educational Studies, University Putra Malaysia

Mohd. Arif Hj. Ismail

Faculty of Education, National University of Malaysia

Abstract

Before the birth of multimedia, films were the major media that could combine audio, visual, movement, color and three-dimensional effects in one presentation. Although its inception was as an entertainment media but researchs found that films could be used as an instructional tool. In this research *Bukit Kepong* (1980), a locally-produced film, was subjected to a critical examination in terms of its value as an educational film. The main aims of the research were to identify the educational values potrayed in *Bukit Kepong* and to evaluate it as an educational film. 80 in-service teachers were the research respondents. Data were gathered through a triangulation approach: a survey (questionnaire), an elite interview and film narrative content analysis. Research findings showed that although *Bukit Kepong* was not produced specifically as an educational film it could be utilized as an insructional media for many educational values were embedded in it.

Introduction

Films have been in the educational scene for quite some time now. Since their first introduction in the early 20th century, films were exploited to help promote and enhance the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. A number of research on the uses and contributions of films in education were carried out (Fine, 1946; Elliot, 1948; Hoban & van Ormer, 1950; Finn, 1972; McClusky, 1981; Naim Hj. Ahmad, 1987; Lavelle, 1992; Hales & Shaw, 1995; Mohd. Arif Hj. Ismail & Rosnaini Hj. Mahmud, 1999).

Background of the Study and Statement of Problem

The combination of audio, visual, movement, colour and three dimensional effects make films very interesting to view. Therefore, films can be used as teaching-learning tools for they can create and maintain students' interest and motivation (Dale, 1957; Heinich et.al , 1996, Mohd. Arif Hj. Ismail & Rosnaini Hj. Mahmud, 1999). The dramatic elements and creativity of films also help to bring fun into the classroom. Through films, educational messages can be concretely and precisely presented to viewers. Films are often used to show the reality of life, help build personalities, feelings and emotions (Naim Hj. Ahmad, 1995a).

As an innovation, films are mostly associated with entertainment. As such, many educators view films from a narrow perspective, i.e. films are just another entertainment media (Kirschenbaum, 1995). So, it is not suprising if there is lack of interest in using films for educational purposes. As early as 1940's, films especially strip and loop films, were used as teaching-learning tools in Malaysia. Nevertheless, presently, many educators are still reluctant to accept their educational value in and outside the classroom (Naim Hj. Ahmad, 1995 & 1997, Mohd. Arif Hj. Ismail & Rosnaini Hj. Mahmud, 1999).

There are many award-winning films produced locally and these films can be used for educational purposes for they potray global issues such as love, honesty and peace. Among the films that can be used are *Bukit Kepong* (1980), *Dia Ibuku* (1981), *Ranjau Sepanjang Jalan* (1983), *Sayang Salmah* (1995) and P. Ramlee's film classics such as *Anakku Sazali* (1956), *Sarjan Hassan*, (1958) and *Antara Dua Darjat* (1960).

The research was undertaken in an attempt to identify and evaluate the educational value of the film, *Bukit Kepong* (1980). It was not produced or designed specifically to integrate with the teaching-learning curriculum or to achieve teaching objectives. Nevertheless, in the context of this research, *Bukit Kepong* was considered an educational

film since it portrayed a number of educational values such as diligence, patriotism, courage and loyalty. This is in line with the definitions postulated by Chan (1977) and Naim Hj. Ahmad (1995b) that educational films can be any forms of films or videos which can be used and exploited systematically to achieve the teaching-learning objectives.

Research Objectives

Generally, the aim of this research was to identify the contributions of films to education. Specifically, the objectives of the research were:

- (i) to find out the usage level of films in education especially among Islamic Education teachers.
- (ii) to identify the educational values portrayed in *Bukit Kepong* .
- (iii) to evaluate *Bukit Kepong* as an educational film.

Methodology

The research employed a triangulation approach, whereby a survey, an elite interview and analysis of film (narrative content analysis) were used as research instruments. The research subjects were 80 practising/trained teachers who were attending a one-year Special Diploma Teachers' Course at the Islamic Teachers Training College, Bangi, Selangor Darul Ehsan. Subjects were selected based on cluster samplings.

The collection of data was done in stages. In stage one, a narrative content analysis was carried out on *Bukit Kepong*. The analysis was done based on its theme and message. The film was also analyzed by the researchers based on the 17 educational/moral values as postulated by the National Education Philosophy. In stage two, an elite interview with the producer and actor of *Bukit Kepong*, Dato' Jins Shamsudin, was carried out. The interview was structured in nature. In stage three, questionnaires pertaining to the usage level of films in education were distributed to research subjects before viewing *Bukit Kepong*. In stage four, checklists were distributed to research subjects while they were viewing the film. The checklist contained 17 educational /moral values as postulated in the National Education Philosophy. In the final stage, film evaluation forms were distributed to the subjects after they had viewed the film. The evaluation form contained 11 educational features. The evaluation used the Likert Scale 1-5.

Research Findings

Film Profile

Bukit Kepong was produced in 1980 by the Jins Shamsudin Film Production. It was a joint effort between the film production and the Royal Malaysian Police. It was in colour and the showing time was 110 minutes. The director and producer was Jins Shamsudin who was also one of the film's cast. The editor of the film was Johari Ibrahim and the cameraman was S. Mohan. The script was jointly written by Jins Shamsudin, Aimi Jarr, and two police personnels: DSP Ismail Johari and DSP Yusuf Ariffin. Approximately more than one million dollars was spent on *Bukit Kepong's* production and it was considered the most expensive film ever produced locally in the 1980's. In the third Malaysian Film Festival (1982), *Bukit Kepong* won seven awards: The Best Film, Best Director, Best Cameraman, Best Adaptation, Best Sound Effects, Best Choreography and Best Supporting Actress.

Rationale

One of the purposes of *Bukit Kepong's* production was to boost the image and morale of the Royal Malaysian Police. It was also dedicated to the courageous policemen who defended the police station with their lives. It also symbolized the nation's struggle for independence.

Synopsis

Bukit Kepong was produced based on a tragic incident in the Malaysian history during the communist insurgencies. The tragedy occurred at the Bukit Kepong Police Station in Muar, Johore on the 23rd of February 1950.

The film started off with the arrival of the new police sergeant, Sergeant Jamil at the Bukit Kepong Police Station which was manned by 18 policemen. *Bukit Kepong* was quite remote and situated far away from the main roads. Thus, it was an easy target for the communists' attack.

On that fateful day, 23rd February 1950, the communists attacked the police station. Initially the communists, about 200 of them, thought of early victory. However, the courageous policemen successfully defended the station for six hours. Villagers from nearby villages tried to help but the communists took control over all routes leading to the police station. At last, after a long struggle the police station was captured and burned down by the communists. Many policemen and their families were killed, including Sergeant Jamil. Even though the station was destroyed in the fire, the brave and courageous act by the policemen is remembered until today.

Findings

The use of film in education

The use of film in education

No:	Items	n	%
1.	Knowledge of film in education	80	100
2.	Contribution of films to education	76	95
3.	Use of film for teaching and learning purposes	53	66
4.	Films help achieve teaching and learning objectives	67	84

All research subjects (n=80, 100%) responded that they had knowledge of film in education. 95% of the subjects stated that they knew about the contributions of films to education. The subjects also agreed that the use of film in education helped to increase and facilitate the teaching and learning process. According to the subjects, the facts shown on films could increase students' comprehension on a certain topic or subject matter as they were usually in sequence and in systematic order. Films also portrayed various themes and messages that conveyed positive or educational values that could help develop students' personalities. Films could be used as a basis to start group or class discussions. Apart from this, films also helped stimulate students' senses of sight, sound and emotions. Therefore, the teaching and learning environment would be more interesting and fun as it takes boredom out of the classrooms.

On the use of films for teaching and learning purposes, 66% of the subjects stated that they used films/videos for teaching. However, the frequency of using them was rather low (sometimes/once in a while). Twenty eight percent (28%) of the subjects stated that they did not use films for teaching purposes. The reasons for not using films were: lack of facilities and appropriate equipment, limited materials and lack of time for preparation. Another 6% of the subjects were not sure whether they used films in class.

On the suitability of using films in the teaching and learning process, 95% of the subjects chose documentary films as the films best suited for educational purposes. Eighty percent (80%) chose drama/science fiction films, 58% chose animation/cartoons, 15% chose advertisements and 28% chose comedies.

Types of films suitable for teaching and learning purposes

No:	Types of Film	n	%
1.	Documentary	76	95
2.	Drama	64	80
3.	Science Fiction	64	80
4.	Animation/Cartoons	46	58
5.	Advertisements	28	35
6.	Comedies	22	28

On the question whether films helped in achieving teaching and learning objectives, 84% of the subjects agreed that they did. Another 16% of the subjects disagreed.

The findings showed that the usage level of films in education among the subjects were rather high. The different types of films could be used and tailored to suit students' competency level and curriculum needs. Various teaching approaches, methods, techniques and activities could be carried out. Hence, films could be used to make the process of teaching and learning effective, interesting and fun.

Narrative Content Analysis of *Bukit Kepong*

Findings showed that the film was a tragic and touching film. However, it portrayed a number of educational values. The most dominant values shown were patriotism and community spirit. *Bukit Kepong's* story was based on the nation's history and its message was clear. It highlighted the plight of the brave policemen and their families who fought hard for the nation's glory.

Educational/Moral Values in *Bukit Kepong*

Research subjects' agreement on the educational/moral values found in *Bukit Kepong*

No:	Educational/Moral Values	n	%
1.	Love	79	99
2.	Patriotism	78	98
3.	Bravery	77	96
4.	High Esteem	75	94
5.	Community Spirit	75	94
6.	Respect	74	93
7.	Kind-Heartedness	72	90
8.	Cooperation	71	89
9.	Self-Resilience	69	86
10.	Thankfulness	66	83

11.	Rasionale	61	76
12.	Honesty	60	75
13.	Diligence	59	74
14.	Physical & Mental Hygiene	58	73
15.	Fairness	49	61
16.	Moderateness	48	60
17.	Freedom	41	51

Based on a checklist which listed out all the 17 educational/moral values postulated in KBSR and KBSM (The Primary School Curriculum and The Secondary School Integrated Curriculum), the subjects responded that all of these values could be found in *Bukit Kepong*. 99% of the subjects agreed that love was the educational/moral value most frequently shown. This was followed by patriotism (98%), high esteem (94%), community spirit (94%), kind-heartedness (90%), cooperation (89%), self-resilience (86%), thankfulness (83%), rasionale (76%), honesty (75%), diligence (74%), physical and mental hygiene (73%), fairness (61%), moderateness (60%) and freedom (51%).

The Value of *Bukit Kepong* as an Educational Film

Profile of *Bukit Kepong* as an educational film

No:	Educational features/Characteristics	Likert Scale
1.	Self-reliance	4.04
2.	National Identity	4.04
3.	Overall Story	3.83
4.	Appropriacy of Language Used by the Cast	3.80
5.	Theme	3.74
6.	Positive Elements	3.74
7.	Educational Elements	3.64
8.	Nation’s Vision	3.64
9.	Language Used	3.39
10	Cultural Elements	3.39
11.	Religious Elements	2.90

*overall average value = 3.61

Based on 11 educational features or characteristics determined by the researchers, the research subjects agreed that *Bukit Kepong* could be considered as an educational film. Self-reliance and national identity were the two values which received highest rating (4.04 on the Likert scale). This was followed by the overall story (3.83), the theme (3.74), appropriacy of language used by the cast (3.80), the language used (3.39), educational elements (3.64), the nation’s vision (3.64), cultural elements (3.39) and religious elements (2.9).

Conclusion

Findings from this research show that *Bukit Kepong* has its educational value and is suitable as a tool and as a resource material that can help facilitate the teaching and learning process. Presently in market there are many local and imported films which are being converted into videos and compact discs. They are much cheaper now and easier to manipulate to cater to students’ educational needs. Indeed *Bukit Kepong* is one such film that helps achieve the teaching and learning objectives.

References

Chan Bing Fai (1977). *Audio-visual Aids in Teaching*. Kuala Lumpur: Anthonian Store Sdn. Bhd.
 Dale, E. (1957). *Audio-visual Methods in Teaching*. New York: The Dryden Press.
 Elliot, G. M. (1948). *The Genesis of Educational Film*. *Film and Education*. New York: Philosophical Library.
 Fine, B. (1946). *The UNESCO and International Education*. *The Journal of Educational Sociology* 20 (1): 18-20.
 Finn, J. D. (1972). *The Emerging Technology of Education*. *Extending Education Through Technology: Selected Writings by James D. Finn*. Washington DC: Association for Educational Communications and Technology.
 Hayles, L.W. and Shaw, I. S. (1995). *The Effect of Videos on Students’ Thinking about the Holocaust in World War II*. A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. San Francisco. April 18-22, 1995.

- Heinich, R., Molenda, M., and Russell, J.D. (1996). Instructional Media and the New Technologies of Instructions. 4th ed. New York: The Gordon Co.
- Hoban, C. F. and van Ormer (1950). Instructional Film Research, 1918 – 1950. New York: Arno Press and The NY Times.
- Kirschenbaum, H. (1995). 100 Ways to Enhance Values and Morality in Schools and Youth Settings. Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon.
- Lavelle, R. (1992). *Documentary Films, Educational Technology and Eyes on the Prize*. Social Education. October 1992, Vol. 56 (6). 3454-348.
- McClusky, F.D. (1981). DVI, DAVI, AECT: A long View. Educational Media Yearbook: 1981. J.W. Brown & S.N. Brown (eds). Littleton Libraries Unlimited.
- Mohd. Arif Hj. Ismail and Rosnaini Hj. Mahmud. (1999). Filem in Education: Teaching and Learning Perspective. Faculty of Education, National University of Malaysia, Bangi.
- Naim Hj. Ahmad (1987). The Film Nomads of the Jungle. (NOTJ Malaya, 1948). A Review and a Comparative Study of the Nomadic Group's Lifestyle as Portrayed in the film and Observed in the Present. Ed. D. Dissertation. Indiana University, U.S.A.
- Naim Hj. Ahmad (1995a). Filem Sebagai Alat dan bahan Kajian. Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia.
- Naim Hj. Ahmad (1995b). Penerbitan Seni Video. Paper presented at Akademi Seni, Melaka.
- Naim Hj. Ahmad (1997). Membentuk Kayu Ukur dan Penilaian Filem Melayu. Paper presented at the Malay Films National Seminar. Universiti Putra Malaysia, 29-30 September, 1997.

Biodata

Rosnaini Hj. Mahmud is a lecturer at the Educational Technology Unit, Faculty of Educational Studies, Faculty of Educational Studies, University Putra Malaysia. Her research interests includes Media Design & Production and Multimedia Design & Development.

Mohd. Arif Hj. Ismail is an Educational Technology lecturer at the Faculty of Education, National University of Malaysia. His research interests includes Video Productions & Multimedia and Development & Prototyping of Courseware.